

●to take a *chance*



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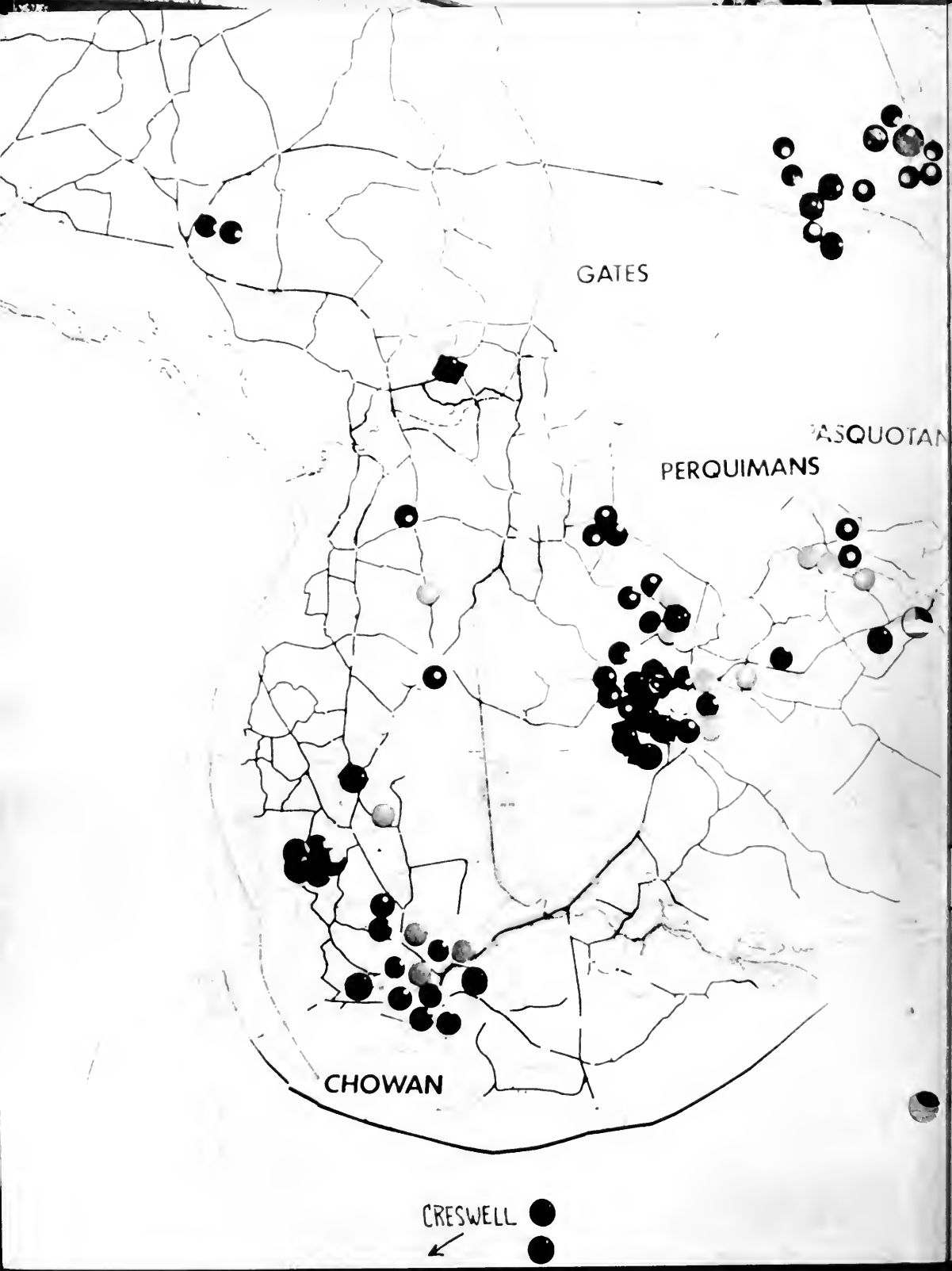
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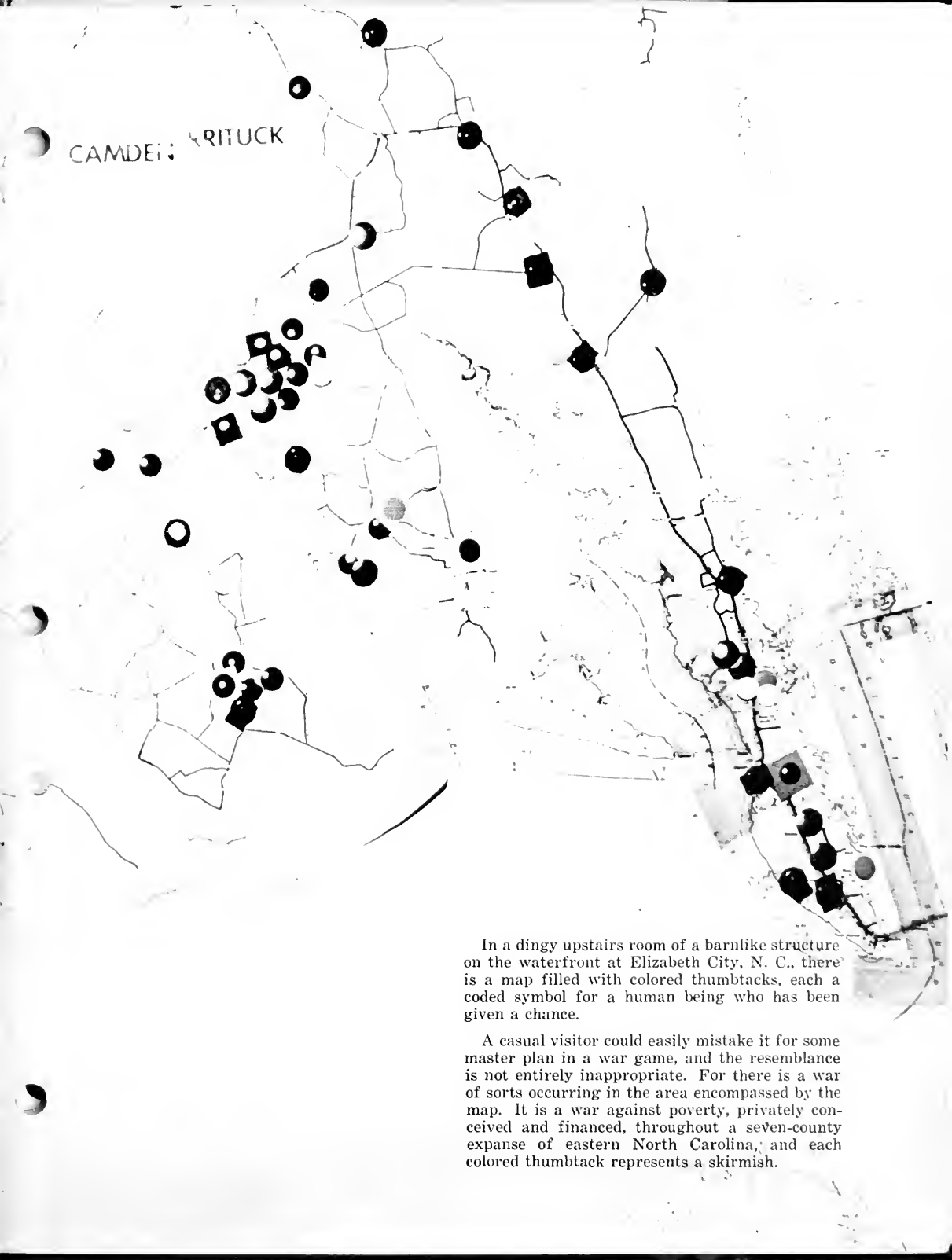
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A map of eastern North Carolina, showing the coastline and major roads. The map is covered with numerous black thumbtacks of various shapes (circles, squares, and triangles) placed at various locations. The thumbtacks are more densely clustered in the western part of the state and along the coast. The text "CAMDEN: CRITUCK" is visible in the upper left corner.

CAMDEN: CRITUCK

In a dingy upstairs room of a barnlike structure on the waterfront at Elizabeth City, N. C., there is a map filled with colored thumbtacks, each a coded symbol for a human being who has been given a chance.

A casual visitor could easily mistake it for some master plan in a war game, and the resemblance is not entirely inappropriate. For there is a war of sorts occurring in the area encompassed by the map. It is a war against poverty, privately conceived and financed, throughout a seven-county expanse of eastern North Carolina, and each colored thumbtack represents a skirmish.

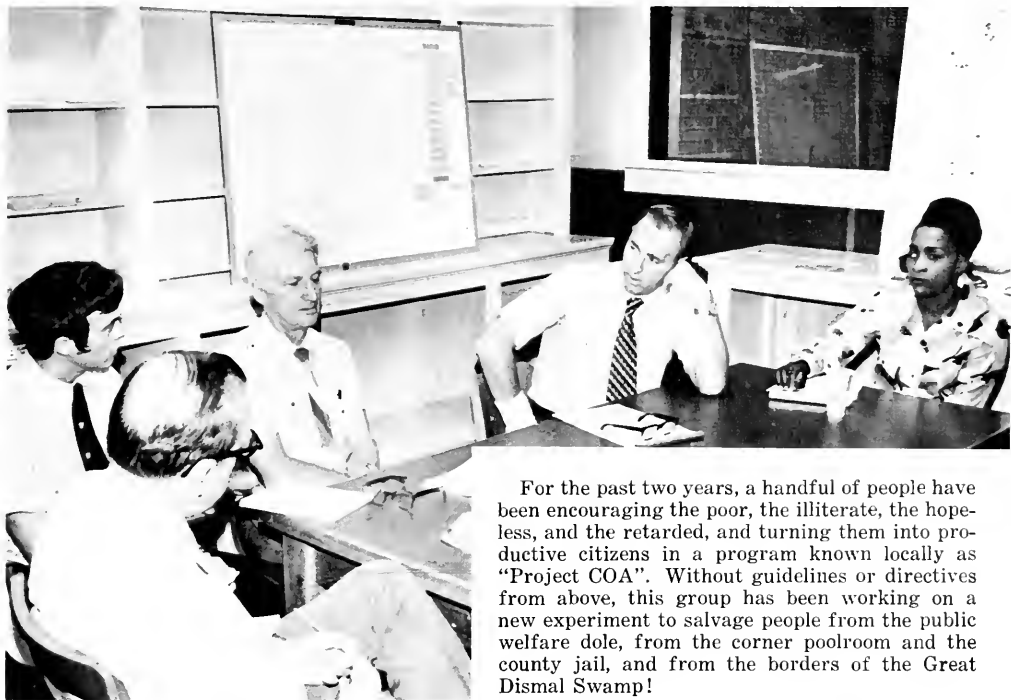


This silver tack is a young one-legged black girl who has earned independence by learning how to upholster furniture; the blue one, there, is the mentally retarded son of a prominent local citizen who now supports himself as a skilled carpenter; and that green one was a diabetic former mill hand whose nerves would not tolerate indoor work. He is now an accomplished brick mason with a new car, a good income, and a new life.

There are more than two hundred coded thumb-tacks in the map, and not all of them represent battles won. Here is one representing a bright young parolee who ranked high in vocational class, but flunked probation. Next to him is a man who finished his masonry course with high scores, but has no interest in his many job offers.

Still, this collection of color symbols scattered across a map of North Carolina's sprawling Albemarle region may represent one of man's most successful, and certainly one of his most unique, social experiments.





For the past two years, a handful of people have been encouraging the poor, the illiterate, the hopeless, and the retarded, and turning them into productive citizens in a program known locally as "Project COA". Without guidelines or directives from above, this group has been working on a new experiment to salvage people from the public welfare dole, from the corner poolroom and the county jail, and from the borders of the Great Dismal Swamp!

A great many of them jump at what they recognize as their only chance. Others are persistently "hounded" by members of the "Project COA" group until they finally surrender to the pressure and enroll in a class just for a little peace. All have one thing in common; they have been in contact with "Project COA", and they have been given a chance. Young or old, black or white, the people of Albemarle are finding out that "Project COA" provides a new door in a wall from behind which there once was no escape.





Credit for opening that door goes to Dr. Bruce Petteway, the dynamic young president of the College of The Albemarle at Elizabeth City, who had the temerity to ask for, and get, a \$440,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. That grant has made it possible to begin a new era for College of The Albemarle. Ninety thousand dollars was used as "seed money" to begin a \$1,000,000 occupational education building. Additional funds were secured from a North Carolina foundation, from two federal sources, and from the State of North Carolina. Thus, the original \$90,000 generated an additional one million, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Land was needed for the new building, however, and none was available at the original site. The college was hemmed in by expensive residential property on three sides and the beautiful Pasquotank River on the other. Finding space for a new building would cause an over-crowded problem to reach disastrous proportions. A decision was made to relocate the college on a new site. A 42-acre farm was purchased after much persuasion and arrangements for attractive terms. Then, a three-phase plan was developed for relocation of the college on the new site.

Another \$60,000 of the Rockefeller money was dedicated over a three year period for student aid and scholarship grants. It was originally anticipated that an additional \$20,000 per year would make possible a forty-five thousand dollar increase in financial aid available to students. Actually, a much greater gain was realized. Before foundation assistance, the college managed a financial aid program totaling \$29,706. Two years later, foundation monies had enabled the student financial aid program to award over \$130,000 to deserving students.

With the exception of a modest amount for planning, the remainder has gone to finance Petteway's innovative three-year "Project COA", a program designed to reach poor rural people unreached through any other vocational or educational agencies in the region. It is only partly coincidence that the initials in "Project COA" fit the title "College of The Albemarle". Within the project, COA stands for "*Careers, Opportunities, Advancement*".

Petteway, who got his doctorate in Community College Administration at N. C. State, with a minor in Political Science, has transformed the College of The Albemarle — once described as "the college that could not survive" — into a dynamic community force within the Albemarle region. It reflects his philosophy, and his attitudes toward solving problems, which spill over in his conversation:

"... I'd rather see us grow our own industry, than go out and hunt it in other places.

"... If you have to respond immediately and effectively to certain community needs, you can do it.

"... At "Project COA" we say: 'We're not going to teach you a lot of English, or history, but simply how to secure a job. And then we'll take you and help you get a job. Then, it's up to you to keep the job'."

Satisfied that his college was making progress in its normal fields — that of training qualified students in advanced vocational and academic skills — Petteway began to be concerned about the unqualified, the untrained, the derelict, of which the Albemarle region seemed to have more than its share.

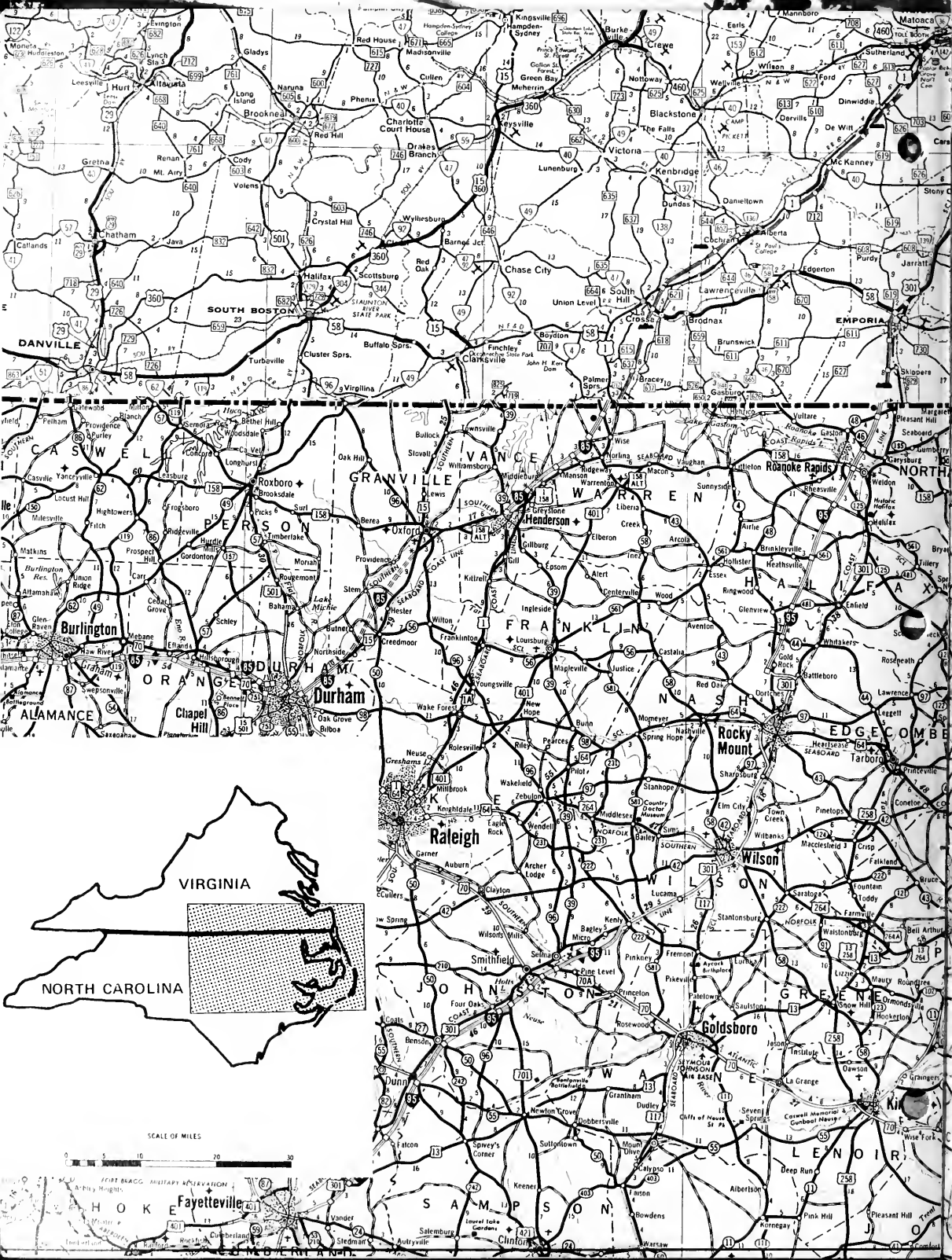
"The thing that makes us different from most of the problems that have been studied is the fact that most of the poor people who have been examined are those who live together in the cities," Petteway reasons.

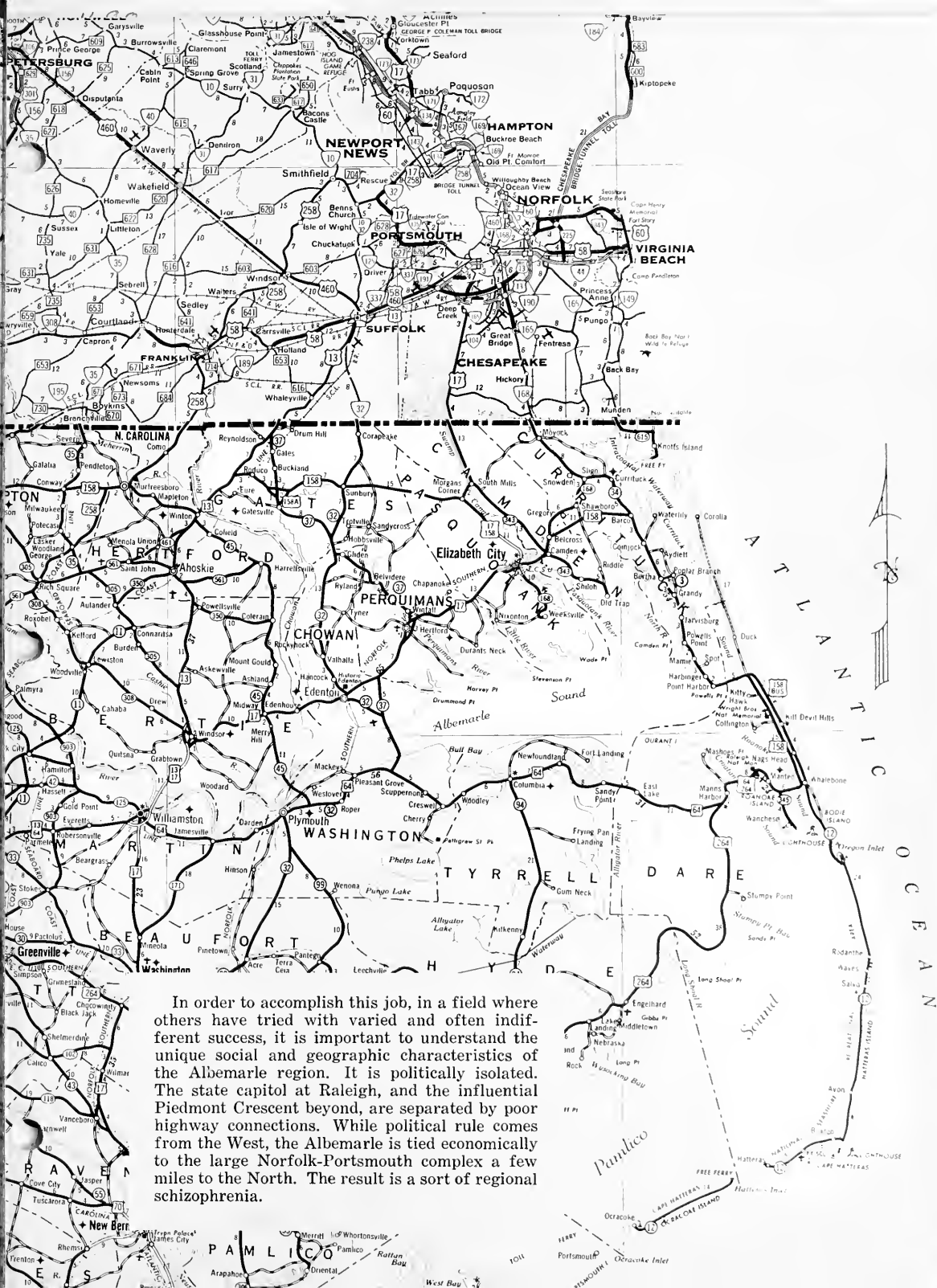
"You don't have the problem of communication with those in congested areas, that you have in our area. Here you may have to drive five miles down a dirt road to get to one family, and to reach one person. Then you may have to go fifteen miles in another direction to find somebody else. Because of the low population density — the dispersion of the population here — I think it takes more effort.

"And yet, this is where the problem originates in the big cities, because the rural poor migrate to the cities, and they are the ones who make up the slum residents in these cities. If we can stop that migration at this point — if we can find out what it is that they need and then somehow help them to lead an adequate life — to find decent housing, to find satisfactory health services — if we can help them do this, there is no need for them to migrate to the cities. Or, if they have to go to the cities, we can at least try to prepare them so they can find employment."

Petteway reasoned that stopping out-migration was only the beginning. To keep them within the Albemarle, he had to provide an incentive, and that meant employment:

"If we can do this with enough people, chances are we can make a significant impact on the economic levels, or the living standards, of all the people we are associated with. This is the idea, the philosophy behind it. The next thing is to get to these people ..."





In order to accomplish this job, in a field where others have tried with varied and often indifferent success, it is important to understand the unique social and geographic characteristics of the Albemarle region. It is politically isolated. The state capital at Raleigh, and the influential Piedmont Crescent beyond, are separated by poor highway connections. While political rule comes from the West, the Albemarle is tied economically to the large Norfolk-Portsmouth complex a few miles to the North. The result is a sort of regional schizophrenia.

Geographically, the seven Albemarle counties sprawl over a vast, watery coastal area which makes transportation difficult within the region. Economically, it is subject to four major industries all of which are seasonal: Agriculture, fishing, lumbering and tourism. These qualities are reflected in the region's growth over the past three decades. In 28 years, from 1940 to 1968, the population increased by a mere 5,000 and currently stands at slightly more than 75,000. These people are mostly the comparatively old or relatively young. More than two of every five are nonwhite. Of those over 25, three of every five have had no education beyond the eighth grade.

To sum up, the drop-out rate is high, much of the Albemarle's employment is highly seasonal, the unemployment rate in the seven counties consistently is higher than the rest of the state, and over one-half of the region's families earned less than \$3,000 in 1960.

"They are involved in a cycle of poverty," says Petteway. "How do you get them out? Well, if you can take these people who are not working, who are unemployed or under-employed, and you can bring them in and train them — show them possibilities for success — and teach them that there's no need for a feeling of helplessness or despondency — if we can do this successfully, we have done something worthwhile for the area!"

Petteway decided a new approach was needed to reach the people. The first move was to hire W. Clayton Morrisette as director of Project COA. A former dean of another North Carolina college, Morrisette had retired at 46 and purchased a motel on the Outer Banks. Challenged by the project, his forte is rooting directly to the source of the problem, and worrying later about bureaucratic red-tape. From years of experience as a teacher and administrator, he has developed his own theories about adult education:

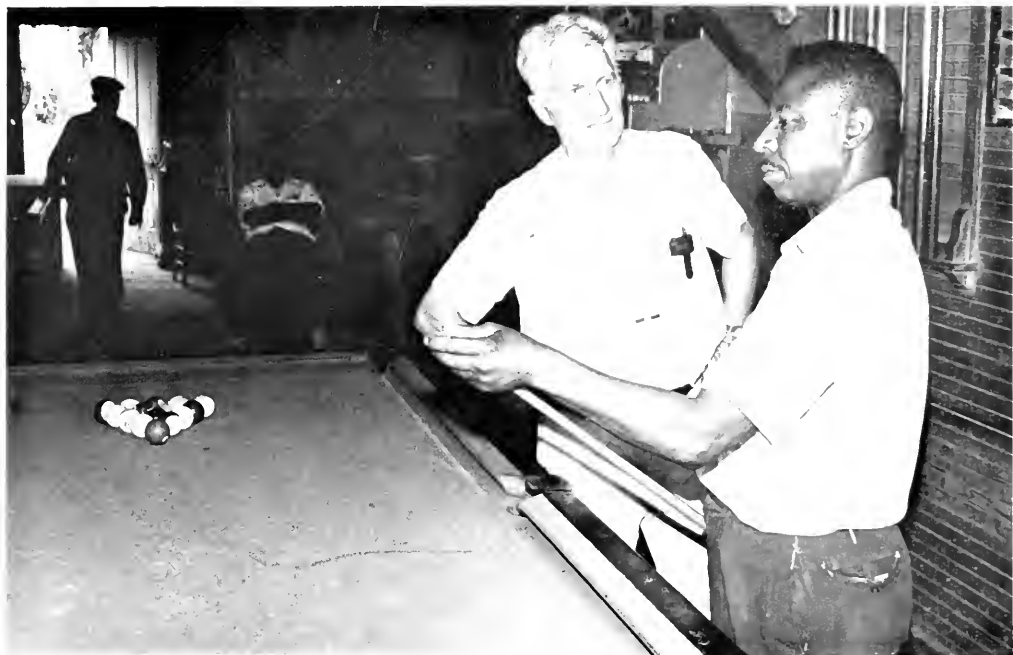
"Nine out of ten people enrolled in adult education classes are those taking specialized courses for their own pleasure — for personal interest and not as a trade or vocation. We must find a way to reach the poor, hungry and discouraged. The people we were after at Project COA are the forgotten group in North Carolina education."

Morrisette hired three hand-picked recruiters who knew the area, understood the problem, and exhibited enthusiasm for finding and encouraging people who need training. The largest town in the Albemarle is Elizabeth City. This area was assigned to Fred Fearing, a retired postal worker known for his extra-curricula activities ranging from coaching young ball teams to fund-raising drives and antique collecting. A court bondsman, Fearing also knows his way around every Pasquotank County pool room, sportsman's lounge, and street corner. As a mail carrier, he spent 20 years talking every dog in town out of chewing his ankle, and knows all their owners. Fearing's subsequent score in snaring candidates for Project COA's courses has borne out Morrisette's talent for recruiting.

The next selection was Mrs. Marion Walston, a social worker, community action organizer, Currituck County native, and a black. Already familiar with problems of low income families, particularly the Negroes, Mrs. Walston had a backlog of community respect and admiration, and was assigned the coastal Albemarle area as her particular bailiwick.

For his third recruiter, Morrisette picked 21-year old Carl W. Lewis, Jr., fresh out of Perquimans County and vocational school, with little work experience, but a reputation for civic activity among the Boy Scouts, the Rescue Squad, and others. He loves the Albemarle region where he grew up and prefers working there to life in some urban area. Lewis was assigned his territory, Albemarle's western one-third, including Gates, Chowan and Perquimans Counties.









To provide transportation for trainees to the college, Petteway purchased three buses. Never mind that no North Carolina Community College had ever attempted to set up such a transportation system. Never mind that almost 2,000 square miles had to be covered every day. Never mind that some people laughed at the sight of a school bus marked "College of The Albemarle".



student enrolled in the project IS a special case. While the level of existence for the unemployed and under-employed may appear to be the same shade of amorphous gray when viewed from above, it dissolves into highly individualistic cases once the layer is penetrated by Morrisette's recruiters.

"There is no control group," says Morrisette. "My three recruiters are lay people. Part of our approach is 'don't mention college, or higher education.' That might frighten them away. Our people stress training — how to learn something that will help the individual earn money."

The problems are myriad. One of Morrisette's toughest jobs is finding good instructors who are not employed and will take on a ten- or twelve-week course without a future guarantee. Another is the choosing of a curriculum.

"We plan our programs on a seasonal basis," says Morrisette. "We find a farm hand out of work in the dead of winter, so we offer him a course in brick-laying in anticipation of the spring construction season. Sales clerks are trained in early fall to be available for the holiday rush season. We catch them 'in between' when they are on welfare or unemployment. All the local agencies know what we are doing, and cooperate fully."

The project's courses are designed primarily to keep people in their own communities, but make them producing, self-reliant citizens. "Our welders can get jobs in Norfolk, however, and most of them do. Of the last class of nine graduates, eight went to work immediately at the shipyards. Brick masons can work in the city, but there is plenty of brick work right in this area, too."

But welding and brick-laying are considered a man's work. Those who desperately need work in the Albemarle region and cannot move away for one reason or another are Project COA's prime challenge, and most of them are women.

Each morning, a bus run begins at Gates (40 miles to Elizabeth City), at Edenton (30 miles to Elizabeth City), and at Manteo (75 miles to Elizabeth City!). Along the Dismal Swamp canals they roll, across the coastal rivers and creeks, alongside the resort beaches of Dare County, past the dunes at Jockey Ridge, gathering up students for the long ride to Elizabeth City. Albemarle residents may smile now at buses marked "College of The Albemarle", but nobody laughs or snickers anymore. Project COA's bussing program is lauded, applauded, and admired.

The project's second concern was classroom space. With \$90 thousand of the Rockefeller Foundation grant already motivating bulldozers across town at the new campus, Petteway's strategy was beginning to roll. But meantime, the college's present location — a former hospital hard by the lovely cypress-shrouded banks of the Pasquotank River — was overflowing with students enrolled in the college's regular courses, and there was no space to provide classrooms and shops for the new courses and the trainees.

To remedy this, the school leased a cavernous barn fronting the river about two miles from the regular campus. What appeared to be an inconvenient stop-gap may have turned into a blessing in disguise, according to Morrisette. "I feel our location is one reason for our success," he says. "They like this building here on the river. It's shabby, it's not a big, bustling campus. They can see it for what it is, and they feel at ease. We have to talk to them on their own level. Many are frightened or suspicious. A sophisticated approach just will not work."

Not that project students are patronized, or accorded treatment obviously intended to be deferential. "It is important that no student be identified as a special under-privileged individual," is part of Project COA's credo. Nevertheless, each



Considerable inventiveness is required to conceive and fashion courses designed to provide a skill for which a community need often is not apparent. There is a constant search for new courses women can take, which can be taught within a limited time of a few weeks, after which they can be absorbed into the job market. Conversely, care must be taken, once a working formula is discovered, not to glut the potential, but often limited, job market.



Probation Officer Mike Thomas, with Judge Wilton F. Walker, Jr.

"We have plenty of women who need something to supplement their income," says Morrisette. "Many of these are not married, yet may have five or six children. They have to stay here in the Albemarle, and get by however they can." Meeting that need can be a challenge.

"For instance, we had a Waitress course," Morrisette continued. "We took young ladies and first put them in our college Cosmetology lab so they could learn grooming — care of their teeth — that sort of thing. Many could not fix their own hair. The local health center examined them, referred them for dental care and other treatment."

Once he had his students for his Waitress course, Morrisette ran into another problem — racial prejudice. Some local restaurants refused to let black women stand by and observe regular waitresses at work, as part of the training. "That's gradually changing," Morrisette said. "It's just taking us a little longer." With a total population of 75,000 people, there is a limited demand in the Albemarle for waitresses, and so the search for other productive training ideas continues.

In its first year, Project COA had provisions for on-the-job training, called JAC—Job Assured Cooperative. Under this program, a student was

put into a shop or business and his salary paid by COA while he served an apprenticeship. Presumably, under the contract terms, the employer would get a competent, trained employee at the completion of the course, which he agreed to take on as permanent help. Morrisette believes in meticulously following up a student's progress: "Many employers signed agreements and lived up to them, and we had good results. Others took advantage of it. They used the students for menial tasks, like janitors, and didn't come through with the training they promised."

The subject is academic for Morrisette, however. Rockefeller, noting that JAC was in conflict with other governmental programs in the Albemarle, ruled it out of the budget for subsequent years. Rockefeller's only stipulation has been that Project COA should experiment, innovate, and not conflict with the existing programs of other agencies. Morrisette still feels that "job training is the best way of all, but the system has to have teeth. Also, it requires more red-tape and supervision than we can give."

Except for some instances of racial prejudice, which Morrisette says is improving, community reaction to Project COA ranges from favorable to ecstatic. Most initial resistance came from locally owned firms who had to be sold on the idea of hiring previously unemployable people. Chain store operations and other 'outside' businesses, accustomed to adjusting their procedures to the times, were more tractable. Elizabeth City has few chain-type operations, but it is growing. As it grows, prejudice fades.

"A big problem is making sure the student really learns his trade," says Morrisette. "There's no point in sending a man out with a certificate saying he can weld, if he cannot. That would hurt us more than anything else. It has hurt a lot of vocational programs, especially in smaller communities like this, where people know each other. A lot of people say, 'put them in the class, run them through, give them a certificate, say "congratulations, go out there and get a job".' That's why other programs have not been bought by some communities. This one was not totally accepted, when we started."

Nevertheless, the record is impressive. "Last year we enrolled in our courses here approximately 250 people," Morrisette said. "All of these were unskilled, under-privileged people. Most are uneducated, with educational backgrounds of only the fourth or fifth grade. Some 200 of them completed the courses, and we placed most of them in jobs!"



Those figures come more into perspective when compared to the 1,500-odd personal contacts made by Morrisette's three recruiters in order to get the 200 graduates. About one-third of those contacted flatly reject any sort of training program. A good many are found eligible for higher programs and are referred to other divisions of the college; Extension, Technical-Vocational, College Parallel. Yet others procrastinate, find excuses, make appointments, enroll in classes, and never show up.

Project recruiters maintain a 'never say die' attitude about all their contacts, as Dr. Petteway



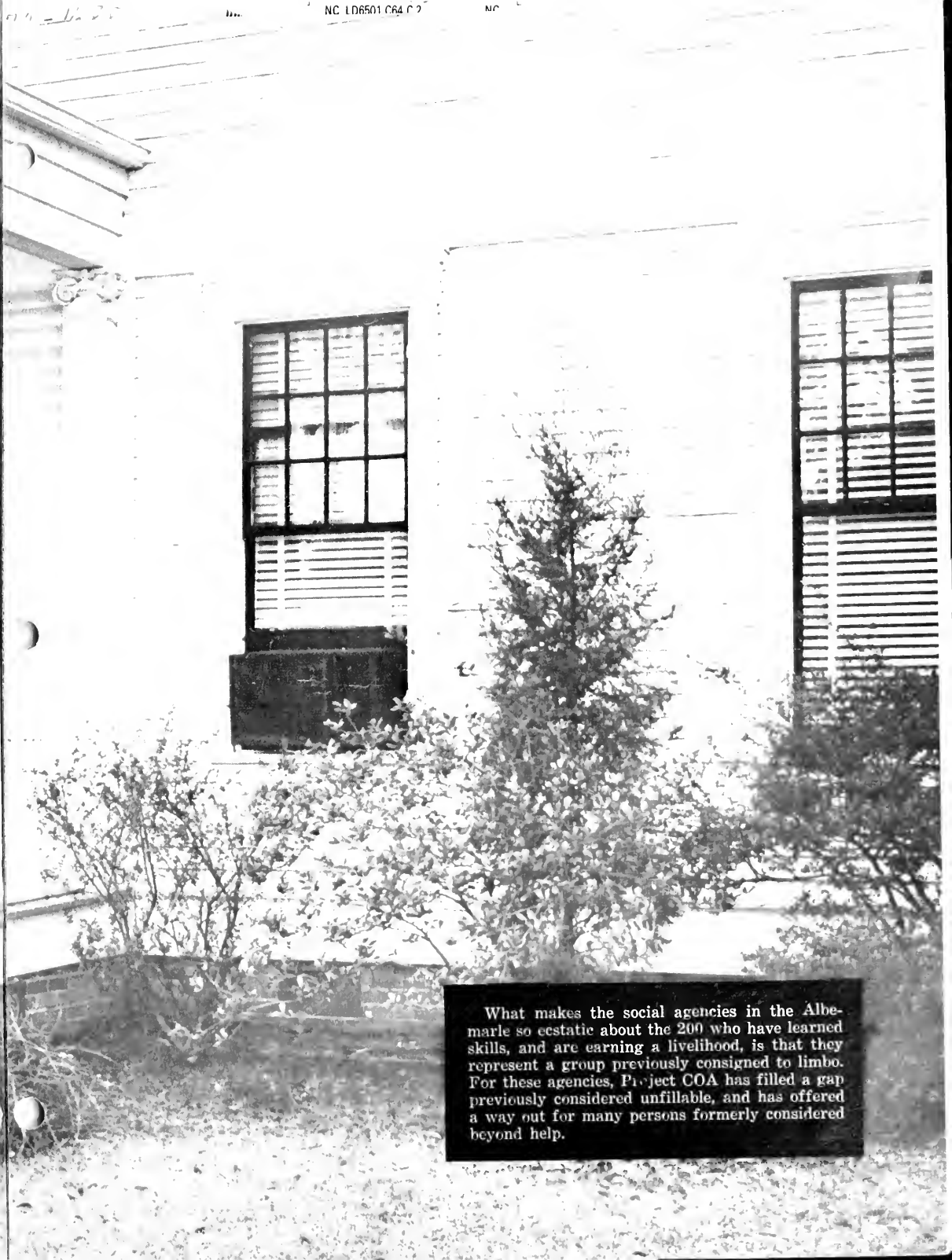
points out. "Of course, we run into chronically unsuccessful people, and trying to rehabilitate them is like trying to rehabilitate an alcoholic. You may work with them three or four years and still never get to first base. So you keep working with those you can help, and occasionally you will come through with some of the chronic ones."



A black and white photograph of a classical-style building with a portico supported by four columns. A sign is mounted on the wall above the entrance. To the left, there are steps leading up to the entrance with a handrail. The building is surrounded by trees and shrubs.

PASQUOTANK COUNTY
DEPT. OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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What makes the social agencies in the Alameda so ecstatic about the 200 who have learned skills, and are earning a livelihood, is that they represent a group previously consigned to limbo. For these agencies, Project COA has filled a gap previously considered unfillable, and has offered a way out for many persons formerly considered beyond help.

"It gives my applicants a sense of hope," said Mrs. Anne Cameron, a counselor for the North Carolina Employment Security Commission in Elizabeth City. "The only place we had to go for this type of training before Project COA, was the Job Corps, and this is for ages 16 through 21. If we have an applicant older than 21, no Job Corps. And if they have no high school diploma, they can't get vocational training at a community college. If Project COA dies when this grant runs out, we are going to miss it. The community as a whole will miss it, too!"

Unique among all Employment Security Commissions in the state, the Elizabeth City branch can make immediate referral of an unskilled person desiring employment to a training agency, rather than the welfare department, without governmental red tape. Mrs. Cameron estimates that the commission has referred some 50 applicants to the project within the past year, about half of whom decided to enroll. "The best way to do it, is to offer courses as they do now," she says of Project COA, "without fees and without reimbursements; just offer the training with the idea that 'there is no guarantee of a job, but if you take this training, you will enhance your skill, or at least acquire some skill if you have none.'"

People go to Mrs. Cameron in the hope that she can find them a job. If they are unqualified for available positions, and otherwise ineligible for training, Project COA stands as a resource which rejects no one.

For others, Project COA is the way out of a blind alley.

"Without this program, many of the younger people of Elizabeth City would go right back to the poolroom," says Probation Officer Mike Thomas. "There would be no employment opportunity for a lot of them."

Thomas' enthusiasm for the project is understandable. Unlike a great many other Tarheel probation officers, he is never without a resource. His charges must at least go through the motions of becoming productive citizens if he so directs. And Mike Thomas, a far but firm man, usually so directs, especially when dealing with the young:

"As a rule, when a man reaches 25 or 30 he's

already found a type of work he likes, but when you have a 16- or 18-year-old, he doesn't know where he stands. If he's under eighteen, he can't get a job in eastern North Carolina without a worker's permit — and employers frown on worker's permits. If he's eighteen, with no trade, he has a real hard time securing employment. If he's 21 or 22, a lot of times he's married, children have come along, he's unemployed, has no trade — so he just goes from one rut to another. But this program, Project COA, takes up the slack."

Thomas regrets there has been nothing like it in the Albemarle before now. "There are a lot of guys around here 21-years-old or more that, had this program been available when they were 17, would not be in the rut and financial strain they are in right now." Thomas refers generally to the social strata into which his daily work takes him as a probation officer. Specifically, however, he speaks of those assigned to his care and supervision by the courts: "I have over a hundred probationers, and only about three are giving me any real problem. *The difference is Project COA.*"

Not that everything is a bed of roses. The project recruiters lean heavily on local school dropouts as a major source for their contacts, but even COA has its share of students that fall by the way. "Some of our probationers get in trouble again and go back to jail," Morrisette said. "Others finish our training and get good job offers, but just will not go to work. Many show enthusiasm when they get here, and they learn a trade and we put them to work. Then we check on them the next month, and they are back sitting on their front porch.

"Still others get an over-inflated attitude of their worth. One woman took our course and we got her what we thought was a good job, considering she had no work experience, but she held out for \$2.75 an hour, which of course the job would not pay. We still don't give up. We still try to find them a job. We anticipate that many are looking for an excuse not to work.

"Of course, motivation is a problem. A lot of our students can figure the difference between \$30.00 a week they can get from Welfare, or \$35.00 to work a part-time job. If social services will put the bare necessities in their bellies for nothing, then they say, 'why work all week for an extra five bucks?'"



Once Morrisette and his group have chosen a curriculum, it is up to the three recruiters to supply the trainees to fill the class. Their methodology is as different as their territories.

"That's our big advantage," says Dr. Petteway. "By getting lay people in, rather than stereotyped professionals, we can accomplish more in a shorter period of time. We decide what's needed, and try to do it as quickly as we can. We are trying to help individuals, not groups.

"There are no quotas to meet, simply a job to be done. If it takes two days to convince one person, and to get him into the Project COA program by working with the social agencies — getting babysitters and work out a whole lot of other problems in order to get him into the program — well, we simply spend two days with him. Try to help him get in. I think this maybe has had more to do with our success than anything else. The Rockefeller Foundation Grant is an experimental one, and that means that we are to use whatever methods we think best, in order to do the job!"

Once a prospect decides to enroll in a Project COA course — whether through a recruiter, a friend, or his friendly probation officer — the procedure is similar to other vocational classes. Grades are kept on both his laboratory work, and classroom experience. An attendance form goes into his file, and he is allowed no more than five unexcused absences, or two consecutive absences, or three tardies before his record is pulled and his reasons noted. Instructors make periodic evaluations of the student's work and attitude. Their reports can be forthrightly blunt.

"This guy needs a lot of help," wrote one brick-laying instructor, about a probationer. "When he first started the class, he had the wrong attitude. He was here because he had to be. Later on he started trying harder and finally got to be average at brick laying. He will make a good mason, but it will take a long time."

Left-handedness seems to be an asset for brick-laying students: "This man has come a long way and done an excellent job of making a brick-layer

of himself. He is left-handed and lays a good, steady and neat brick."


Or, "This student is all right if he is working with someone who likes to work. He likes to drink a little, but I have never smelled it on him but one time. He will do a good job. He is left-handed."

Once a student graduates, he receives a certificate. "They can show their family and friends that they have completed a College of The Albarmarle program," says Mike Thomas. "They get a feeling of security and accomplishment. This is what I have found as a probation officer, talking to people who have participated. They walk in my office and see my diploma hanging on the wall, and they show me theirs — just as proud of it as I am of mine!"

In their concern to motivate students, and to understand their problems, Project COA personnel frequently uncover some startling cases. One young man recruited from the Dismal Swamp country into a welding course was always in attendance, but aloof to his shop surroundings. Sensing a problem, instructors probed for an answer but were unable to get more than a neutral response from the student. They referred the case to Morrisette, who took the lad aside and gradually broke down his reserve. "He told me 'it's the noise in town here. Don't you hear it?'" Once reassured that Elizabeth City residents were not deaf and the cosmopolitan sounds of the city are normal, the lad made a successful welder. For him, the cathedral silences of the Dismal Swamp pocosins will probably never be the same.

Of another case, a young black, the instructor wrote, "He is a big, strong guy and does not mind work. He is still young, but he will make a good man if he stays with brick work one year." But the student could hardly stay with the work more than a day. Investigation into his frequent absences revealed he had to work one day in order to afford food for the next. A local agency supplied lunch money, and the student went from \$400 a year loading trucks part-time at the local ice plant, to \$4.50 an hour, laying brick.





Project SOA's most far-reaching effects are the results it has been getting with the young. A 24-year-old father of three, a 9th grade drop-out, goes from a \$60.00 weekly job on the cotton mill night shift to \$150 after learning to lay 228 bricks per hour.

But some case histories of older persons read like Horatio Alger fiction. Leon Saunders was a long-haul truck driver making a high-income until four ulcer operations culminated in complete removal of his stomach and \$158 a month social security disability money, ostensibly for life. Through Marion Walston, Leon and his wife, Minnie, enrolled in Project COA's Upholstery course. "At first, we had to buy zippers one at a time at the retail store," Leon says. "To get tacking strips, Minnie begged empty candy boxes from the stores and cut them up with scissors. We only had one sewing machine, and it was household size." Slowly, the Saunders' business grew. They managed to scrimp up enough for down payment on a second-hand commercial machine. Then they bought a pick-up truck, and another machine. Word of mouth advertising from satisfied customers helped. The Saunders' are now earning \$200 a week net, and Leon hopes to open a larger shop soon and hire other graduates from Project COA.

You can't keep a good man down, according to the saying, but even Leon cannot say where he would be today were it not for Project COA, and the baby blue bus by which he and Minnie commuted 50 miles each day.

The people at Project COA have been performing a complicated juggling act, without benefit of complex facilities, audio-visual aides, computers, highly-paid advisers, psychological screening, and all the other marvels one encounters today. Problems of "Who is available to instruct, What shall be taught, Where can we make the space, When will we have enough students, and How do we find them jobs?" are questions that are faced regularly.

After a while, statistics become meaningless, but among those familiar with Project COA's work

in the Albemarle the vote already has been cast: the scope of its successes far outweighs its failures. It bears repeating that the project has helped people of all types and ages, but that it has reached out especially for those who have no other recourse — no future — except that which Project COA can provide.

Other agencies are too top-heavy, usually operate under too many restrictions, cannot move fast enough, and have long since lost the personal touch in spite of all their efforts. In some instances, Project COA reaches far down the scales, beyond the capability of established bureaucracy. For them the hole is too small. Only Project COA can follow the ferret to ground. Small wonder that, when all else has failed, the other Albemarle social agencies call for Project COA.

Farming has been declining in the region as an employer of labor, and the forestry industry is becoming more and more mechanized with lower and lower labor requirements. Meanwhile, industrial development is progressing slowly and providing few new job opportunities.

What's next?

"We've reached the point now where Social Agencies are committed," says Petteway. "The social services — the welfare department — all have come to depend on us. The judges and probation officers know when they assign somebody to Project COA for occupational training, this is exactly what he gets — they know he does — they've tried it a time or two and found it is successful".

"We don't want to stop at this point and say 'well, we've tried it, and now we're giving up.' We want to keep on going and try it for at least another couple of years to see if it continues to have a permanent impact."





Why has it worked?

"I think that one reason is that the money is not being wasted. There is no red tape, there's no bureaucratic hierarchy that you have to go through to get something done. We are dealing directly with the people and if we have to respond immediately and flexibly to some demand, we can do it, and this is something that the federal agencies often can't do because the laws and regulations, and their policies, restrict them from doing this."

"You wonder, 'isn't this a lot of money to spend?' Well, it really isn't when you come right down to it."

Compared to many federal and foundation projects, Rockefeller's \$440,000 which it gave to the College of The Albemarle is comparatively modest, but they may have gotten one of the world's great bargains. The significance of the grant extends far beyond the college, according to Petteway: "The community college, as a result of the Rockefeller Foundation funds, has meant more to the Albemarle area. It is intimately involved in all of the activities we are called on to support. What they have done to help the college is not just finance Project COA, is not just help us secure money, to build the new building now going up, is not just help us with our student financial aid program, or to provide transportation; but, it has had an impact on the entire Albemarle region."

And so, even at a time when he is concerned with extending the life of Project COA, Petteway is involved in projecting the College of the Albemarle into other community-serving roles. Housing, for instance.

"Fred Fearing can tell you about the family which lives right here on the edge of town. The only water they have is the rain water in a ditch near the house. There may be laws on the books saying that you can't rent property to people without water, nevertheless, this is the way the family lives — no sources of fresh water except what they can pull out of a ditch!

"So there are all sorts of problems in housing that may be our responsibility — maybe something that we should get involved with. Perhaps we should be a catalyst to get some agency or some group or organization working to develop housing, and to take advantage of some of the HUD proposals for housing, and do something in this area for the rural people."

Petteway also thinks the college's role leads beyond the needs of the poor, into problems laid upon the Albemarle by geographical and political boundaries.

"One of the big problems of course is transportation. In our bus system we can only operate now on the main highways between Edenton, Mantoo, Gatesville and Elizabeth City. But look at all the people who live off the main roads, they can't participate because they live three miles off the main highway — or five miles.

"What do they do when they need to go to the hospital? When they have an emergency and don't have a telephone? A child drinks poison, for example, how do they get emergency aid for that? What do they do if an accident occurs and no transportation is available? This is a problem, and somehow this is a part of our responsibility, too — to help solve this problem of transportation, of delivery of services to people who live off the beaten roads — whether it be health services or housing services or educational services!"

When he speaks of the Albemarle's needs, and of the impetus given by the Rockefeller Foundation Grant toward solving area problems, words tumble from Petteway's lips in an enthusiastic stream:

"We are not concerned just with delivering educational opportunity to the impoverished rural people of the area. We are interested in seeing that they get safe drinking water, that they have adequate sewage disposal, that they have somewhere to dispose of their trash, that there are adequate zoning regulations to prevent a haphazard growth of the area, that our rivers, streams and air are not polluted, that we have equitable tax structures in our local governing units so that citizens pay only for the services they receive. If we can sell this concept to our taxpayers, then we can make the next step toward what ultimately will have to be the consolidation of the counties into a larger administrative unit."

"So, by being interested in — and to a certain extent involved in all these things — we find ourselves leading efforts to make the Dismal Swamp into a state park, to work with the East Carolina University Regional Development Institute in keeping the Dismal Swamp Canal open and operating, of working with communities in securing new industry in our Albemarle area, in helping organize the Albemarle Area Regional Planning and Development Commission which we hope will seek federal technicians to come in and plan for our entire area a series of master water systems so that everybody can have drinking water that is safe and a total master sewage disposal system."

The College of the Albemarle has just completed its first decade. There are as yet no ivy-bound towers. An older, more traditional institution might have applied different tactics to the Albemarle's problems.

This unique experiment is nearing the end of its initial phase. Will it be refunded and continue to serve the impoverished persons of the Albemarle region? College officials are optimistic that somehow the project will be allowed to continue. After all, there are human lives which are being altered; hopeless persons are finding hope; there is an outstretched hand to lift up those sunk deep in despair and despondency. The ten talents which were entrusted to the College of The Albemarle have been wisely used and have yielded ten more. Those who are faithful over few things will be made ruler over many.

COURSES

Project COA personnel must summon all their ingenuity in choosing a curriculum. To be acceptable, a course must meet several criteria. It must satisfy a job market in the immediate area; it must teach a usable skill to the uneducated and (frequently) the retarded, it must be of such duration that the student can afford to invest the time, and it must offer the prospect a hope for a better future. Courses that have been offered at Project COA range from the physical, such as masonry, through the technical such as refrigeration and air conditioning, to the social — such simple things as good grooming and lessons in greeting strangers. For a person who for one reason or another is tied to the homeplace, the project offers training in crafts and furniture upholstery. For the student who can and will commute to work, construction training and welding are offered. Another problem is not to glut the market with a particular skill, resulting either in a dilution of a pay scale or the training of an individual in a skill for which there are no longer any openings. Thus, the project conducted four masonry classes in two years to fill a constant need in the construction industry, but only one salesclerk class because it filled the area's needs in one fell swoop, achieving the high record of placing 12 of 13 graduates.

The curriculum, and the record, through 1971:

1. **HUMAN RELATIONS** (1 class) (4 weeks - 120 hours)

This course is designed to train students for employment in jobs where human relations and personality are primary factors. There are many job opportunities open for those who understand human behavior as applied to interpersonal relations. Job opportunities are available as salesclerk, waitress, receptionist, cashier, hostess, checkout clerk, hostess, checkout clerk, checkroom girl, merchandise demonstrator, etc.

2. **SALESCLERK** (1 class) (4 weeks - 120)

Trains students for employment in jobs that human relations and personality are primary factors. Emphasis is on interpersonal relations and effective communications through correct language usage in speaking and writing. Employment is found as salesclerks, receptionists, cashiers, personnel clerks, checkout clerks, checkroom clerks, and merchandise demonstrators.

3. **MASONRY** (4 classes) (12 weeks - 360 hours)

Instruction is provided in the history of the bricklaying trade, raw materials, basic manu-

facturing processes, and terminology. The use, care and maintenance of tools and equipment of the "travel trades" are studied. On-the-job safety practices are stressed and shop practices are provided in the basic manipulative skills. Students are employed by building contractors to lay brick, tile blocks, concrete, glass, gypsum or terra cotta. He constructs or repairs walls, partitions, arches, sewers, furnaces and other masonry structures.

4. **CARE OF INFANTS AND YOUNG**

CHILDREN (1 class) (11 weeks - 330 hours)

Designed to promote understanding of the role and responsibilities of day care workers. Classroom activities include study of personal adjustments, developmental sequence in infancy and childhood, and needs of young children for optimal intellectual, emotional, and social development. The importance of the adult-child relationship is emphasized. Graduates found employment in day care centers, nursery schools, kindergartens, hospitals, and institutions.

5. **FURNITURE UPHOLSTERY** (2 classes) (5 weeks - 150 hours)

Designed to train students to upholster all types of household furniture. Also includes types of furniture, furniture construction, tools, materials, frames, upholstery procedures, repairing, restyling, and slipcovering. Employment is found at furniture stores or upholstery shops. Graduates may also choose to work full or part time in their own homes or garages.

6. **WAITER-WAITRESS** (1 class) (8 weeks - 240 hours)

Develops an understanding of basic restaurant operating procedures, fundamentals of salesmanship, good health habits, good grooming, good manners, attitudes to making favorable impressions on others, and teaches good human relations. Graduates find employment at the restaurants located in our seven county area.

7. **CRAFTS** (1 class) (6 weeks - 180 hours)

Prepares trainees to develop the skills necessary to produce quality crafts according to his interests and abilities such as: decoupage, copper tooling, basket weaving, candle making, needle point, rug making, pillow making, wood burning, wood carving, woven placemats, woven-top footstools and folk art. Graduates are self employed making crafts marketed in local craft shops.

8. HOME COMPANION FOR THE AGED
(1 class) (8 weeks - 240 hours)

Prepares students to render assistance to aged persons and their families who need support with personal care and home maintenance. Emphasis is on personal hygiene, assisting others with personal care, understanding human relationships, the aging process, nutrition, aged behavior patterns, meal preparation, and home management. Employment for graduates is found in private homes, hospitals, nursing homes, or through health departments and word of mouth.

9. HOME CARE AND FAMILY AIDE
(1 class) (7 weeks - 240 hours)

Teaches students to render services to individuals and families who need assistance with personal care or home problems. Classes emphasize interpersonal relationships, needs of individuals at various life stages, basic principles of nutrition, meal preparation, home organization and management. Graduates find jobs such as clinical aides, home aides, health aides, homemaker's assistant, cottage parent, house parent, day-care aide, or kindergarten aide.

10. REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING HELPER (1 class) (8 weeks - 240 hours)

Training acquaints students with air conditioning fundamentals and provides practical work experience in areas where they can assist a repair technician. He receives additional training through on-the-job experience. Graduates can find employment in refrigeration and air conditioning sales and service stores, furniture and department stores.

11. GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOME STUDY

Gives interested adults who are unable to leave home the opportunity for a general educational background on the high school level so that he will be prepared to take the GED Tests. Subject areas include English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

12. CARE OF CHILDREN AND THE AGED
(2 classes) (8 weeks - 240 hours)

Promotes understanding of the role and re-

sponsibilities of day care workers and to prepare students to render assistance to aged persons and their families who need support with personal care and home maintenance. Classroom work includes personal hygiene, developmental sequence in infancy and childhood, needs of young children for emotional and social development, understanding the aging process, the aged's needs, home management, nutrition, and meal preparation. Graduates find employment in day care centers, nursery schools, kindergartens, child development centers, nursery development centers, hospitals, nursing homes, institutions, camps, and with families who need assistance with care for aged relatives.

13. WELDING (4 classes) (6 weeks - 180 hours)

Teaches the basic welding skills in oxyacetylene welding and cutting. Basic skills in arc welding are included. Emphasis is on familiarization of welding equipment and its safe use. Safety procedures are stressed. All students who satisfactorily complete this course are placed as welders in the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., Newport News, Virginia.

14. METAL BURNING (2 classes) (3 weeks - 90 hours)

Designed to teach the basic skills of metal burning in oxyacetylene and metal cutting. Emphasis is on familiarization of metal burning equipment and its safe use. Methods of burning and applications are included. Safety procedures are stressed. All graduates are placed with Peck Iron and Steel Works, Portsmouth, Virginia.

15. CARPENTRY (1 class) (12 weeks - 360 hours)

Trains students to enter the construction trade as apprentices. Teaches the terms used in carpentry, math and its application in building, care and use of hand tools, care and use of power equipment and tools, sub-flooring, wall joists, framing, rafter cutting, roofing, and installation of pre-fabricated trusses. Safety is stressed throughout the course.

THIS IS COLLEGE OF THE ALBEMARLE

THE COLLEGE - College of The Albemarle is an accredited two year comprehensive community college serving seven counties east of the Chowan River, north of the Albemarle Sound, and south of Virginia. The college operates under a charter granted by the State Board of Education and state policies administered by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges. A local Board of Trustees is the governing body of the institution.

The college is many things - all separate - yet all a part of the whole. It is a blend of realism, vision, planning and practicality. It is the past, the present and the future. It is an education and culture, opportunity, challenge, problems and progress. It is an instrument of the Albemarle Area, the local community and the nation to discover and release the learning processes in the framework of the liberal arts, vocational and technical curricula to prepare and upgrade people of the emerging age. It is an opportunity for the student to find himself, for the adult to broaden his knowledge and acquire new skills.

The college serves the Albemarle Area by providing accessible education, both occupational and academic, for young people and adults in their cultural maturing, developing responsible citizenship and enriched personal living. It can never be stagnant or satisfied; it must be a reservoir that is always refilling and discharging in a constant stream. It must move ahead, yet remain close to its people, sensitive and flexible to their needs, responding quickly to the requirements as they develop.

HISTORY - The idea for a college in Elizabeth City was developed when the Community College Act was passed by the North Carolina General Assembly enabling counties to establish their own two-year colleges.

On November 5, 1960 the people of Pasquotank County voted their approval for the new college by a five to two margin. A charter was issued on December 16, 1960, and shortly thereafter the first Board of Trustees was appointed.

The college opened its doors to its first freshman class in September 1961. The first graduating class received their degrees on May 31, 1963.

The College of The Albemarle was the first college in the State chartered under the Community College Act of 1957. The 1963 Legislature adopted an act, "to promote and encourage education beyond the high school in North Carolina". Among other things, this act authorized the establishment of comprehensive community colleges. The new act became effective on July 1, 1963 and on that same date, at the request of the Board of Trustees and with the joint approval of the Board of Education and Board of Higher Education, the College of The Albemarle became the first comprehensive community college in the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges.

GROWTH - The college in the first decade of operation has grown from an initial enrollment of 182 to a fall quarter 1971 enrollment of 946 curriculum students. The full-time faculty has increased from an original complement of 12 to 49, providing a favorable ratio of one faculty member of 20 full-time students. During the fall quarter 1971, 99 part time faculty members taught 2,013 adult education students throughout the seven-county primary service area.

COMPREHENSIVE OFFERINGS - College of the Albemarle strives to serve its Albemarle community by providing accessible post high school education for young people and adults. Major objectives are:

1. To provide at least two years of college credit courses for those students who desire to transfer to other colleges and universities for higher degrees.
2. To provide two years of technical education appropriate to the needs of the individual and the community for entering employment at the technician level.

3. To provide vocational education for individuals who desire to upgrade themselves in their vocations, or who may desire to acquire initial training in a particular trade.
4. To provide courses for those adult students who wish to develop a vocational interest, improve their personal efficiency, or to enrich their cultural lives.
5. To provide for the development of basic educative skills for those citizens who have been unable to complete the requirements for a high school diploma.

Specific programs offered by the college are:

COLLEGE TRANSFER

Pre-Agriculture
Pre-Art
Pre-Business (Administration)
Pre-Business (Education)
Pre-Drama
Pre-Engineering
Pre-Forestry
Pre-Law
Pre-Liberal Arts
Pre-Mathematics
Pre-Music
Pre-Science
Pre-Teaching (Elementary)
Pre-Teaching (Secondary)

TECHNICAL

Associate Degree Nursing
(Registered Nursing)
Business Administration
Electronics Engineering Technology
General Office Technology
Mechanical Drafting and Design
Technology
Secretarial (Executive)
Teacher Aide

VOCATIONAL

Automotive Mechanics
Carpentry and Cabinetmaking
Cosmetology
Farm Machinery Mechanics
Machinist
Marine Mechanics
Masonry
Practical Nursing
Radio and Television Servicing

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Basic Education
(Grades 1-8)
General Education Development
(Grades 9-12)
Learning Laboratories
Vocational Programs
General Interest Programs
Community Service Programs

FACILITIES - The college began operations in the building formerly utilized by the Albemarle Hospital. The old nurses' residence was converted into a library. A gymnasium - auditorium was built in 1964. As the college grew, it acquired former Coast Guard repair shops and used these buildings to house vocational programs. An old building, loaned to the college by the First United Methodist Church, was renovated for use as an arts and crafts center. In 1970 a downtown building was leased to house a new program in cosmetology, short-term occupational programs, drafting laboratories and a new associate degree program to train registered nurses. The Albemarle Hospital provided suitable facilities for practical nurse education classes. The college, having no playing fields of its own, has made use of community facilities for intramural events and outdoor sports.

The lack of suitable campus space for growth and expansion necessitated the development of a master plan to relocate the college on a site adequate for foreseeable requirements. Forty-two acres contiguous to the Albemarle Hospital on Highway 17 North were purchased and building space needs defined. The master plan calls for the development of the new campus in three phases. The first phase, an occupational education building, is presently under construction with completion of the project scheduled for March or April 1972. Funds for the construction of this building were obtained from private foundations and federal and state sources. Phase two, a two-million dollar classroom-administration-library complex, will require a minimum of \$500,000 from local sources. A capital fund raising campaign to obtain the needed funds is presently in progress. Phase three, a gymnasium-auditorium, will be partially financed through the sale and disposition of property presently owned by the college. Following completion of phase three, College of The Albemarle will be located in its entirety on the new campus site.

FINANCING - The budgetary needs of College of The Albemarle are derived primarily from two sources - the State of North Carolina and Pasquotank County, the county within which the college is located. The State supplies funds for instructional and administrative salaries, clerical assistance, and certain supplies and equipment. The State funds are allocated on a formula based on the average number of students in class during the previous year. Pasquotank County must, by State law, provide funds for the acquisition of land, construction of buildings, and for the operation and maintenance of buildings and grounds.

With the growth experienced by College of The Albemarle in recent years, the required local financing has exceeded the point whereby Pasquotank County can provide needed funds. Efforts are being made to implement a community college district plan in which all seven counties in the primary service area will contribute, on a population formula, to the monetary needs of the college. Six of the seven counties involved have agreed to the plan, and it is anticipated that the seventh county will approve this regional concept to undergird the college.

STUDENTS - College of The Albemarle's prime asset is students. They come from every socioeconomic group and range in age from late teens into golden years. They come to fulfill many objectives and form important foundations. The range of their abilities, aspirations and motivations is as wide as mankind.

Each student possesses worth, and the goal of administrators, faculty and staff at College of The Albemarle is to see that each student grows toward educational, social and emotional maturity. Every teacher and administrator employed, every physical improvement made, and every effort expended -- all are ultimately for the benefit and well-being of the student.

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The author, Franc White, is employed by the East Carolina University News Bureau & Public Relations Department as director of radio and television affairs. He is a journalist, photographer and cinematographer of 26 years' experience. This study of "Project COA" was undertaken at the request of the East Carolina Regional Development Institute. The College of the Alhambra has chosen to publish it in this form.

